

GOVERNANCE



MONITORING AND EVALUATION

GOVERNANCE FOR THE

VALIDATION OF ELIMINATION OF MOTHER-TO-CHILD TRANSMISSION OF HIV AND SYPHILIS

AN OVERVIEW OF VALIDATION STRUCTURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
AT NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND GLOBAL LEVELS

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

EMTCT	elimination of mother-to-child transmission
GVS	Global Validation Secretariat
GVAC	Global Validation Advisory Committee
MTCT	mother-to-child transmission
NVC	national validation committee
NVS	national validation secretariat
PMTCT	prevention of mother-to-child transmission
PTE	path to elimination
RVC	regional validation committee
RVS	regional validation secretariat
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WHO has defined elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis (EMTCT) as a reduction in the number of new HIV and syphilis infections among infants to a level at which they are no longer a public health problem. WHO defines these levels as the impact criteria for country validation of EMTCT for the two infections. Prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) of HIV includes preventing primary HIV infection in women and girls of childbearing age, identifying HIV infection as early as possible before or during pregnancy and postpartum, providing the pregnant and post partum women and their families living with HIV antiretroviral therapy immediately on diagnosis and continuing antiretroviral therapy through the pregnancy and breastfeeding periods. Women are then encouraged to continue antiretroviral therapy for life. PMTCT of syphilis includes early detection of maternal syphilis and immediate treatment with a minimum of one injection of 2.4 million units of benzathine penicillin G intramuscularly at least four weeks before delivery. Partner testing and treatment is strongly recommended to prevent syphilis reinfection during pregnancy.

WHO published the first edition of the *Global guidance on the criteria and processes for validation: elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis* in 2014. In 2017, WHO published the second edition, which included a tiered set of criteria (bronze, silver and gold) to recognize countries with high background prevalence of HIV and syphilis for their tremendous achievements in PMTCT, termed the path to elimination (PTE). As of January 2020, 14 countries had been validated for EMTCT of HIV and/or syphilis. At least five countries in the WHO African Region are projected to be eligible to apply for PTE during 2020–2022. This guidance provides a basic overview of the national, regional and global validation structures and processes needed to assess countries for achieving the criteria required for WHO to validate that a country has achieved EMTCT of HIV and syphilis and the PTE. The purpose and intent of this governance guidance is to provide clarity, consistency and detail related to the structure, function, composition and operational duties of validation committees at national, regional and global levels as an extension to what is provided in the *Global guidance on the criteria and processes for validation: elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis*. In addition, this publication describes the standardized methods for country programme review and validation of EMTCT of HIV and syphilis and PTE at these levels.

In April 2019, an external evaluation was carried out in the form of stakeholder interviews to gather information on experiences, views and perceptions of the process of country assessment and validation of EMTCT of HIV and syphilis with the intent to develop and formalize this first governance document. Findings from the assessment were reviewed at an in-person focused meeting of a subset of Global Validation Advisory Committee (GVAC) members and WHO regional advisors. Summary discussions from this focused meeting were presented at the face-to-face full GVAC meeting in June 2019. Additional input on the draft document was obtained via email from GVAC members during June–August 2019 and submitted to WHO regional advisors and GVAC members for final approval in November 2019.

This governance guidance publication details the agreed upon governance structures that cover national, regional and global activities. Between the publication of this governance guidance in 2020 and the planned third edition of *Global guidance on the criteria and processes for validation: elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis*, the governance structures and processes in this publication serve as the most current methods to be applied to the country review and validation process. Revisions to this publication are expected to be incorporated periodically (every 2–4 years). At the time of the development of this governance document, the criteria and processes for country validation of EMTCT of hepatitis B were in development. Specific governance for the processes related to validating countries for EMTCT of hepatitis B will be forthcoming in a subsequent revision of this guidance.

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